Southeast News

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

VOLUME 31 | NOVEMBER, 1980 | NUMBER 9

Official Call Issued Issued To 13th General Synod

Announcement is hereby made of the meeting of the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ to be held at the Rochester War Memorial, Rochester, New York, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, June 27, 1981, and continuing through 10:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 1, 1981.

There will be a number of open hearings and other meetings on Friday, June 26, 1981. Therefore, delegates and visitors are urged to arrive in Rochester on Friday. Departure from Rochester should be planned for Thursday morning, July 2, 1981.

Signed by Avery D. Post, President and Joseph H. Evans, Secretary, United Church of Christ.

Minority Churches Experience Growth

While the United Church of Christ lost 11 percent of its members in the 1970's, membership in the denomination's minority churches shot up by 21.5 percent during the decade, reports a new study released by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, American Indian and Hispanic congregations took in 13,558 additional members between 1970 and 1979, according to the report. These churches now make up 4.4 percent of the denomination's 1,745,553 members, up from 3.2 percent ten years ago.

Eithty-four new minority-member UCC churches were established during the 1970's.The 485 minority churches account for 7.5 percent of the denomination's 6,467 congregations, compared with 6 percent in 1970.

"During the past decade, a key commitment of the Board has been the strengthening of our minority churches," says the Rev. Dr. Howard E. Spragg, executive vice-president and chief executive officer of the Board for Homeland Ministries. "The results of this study give us solid encouragement for continuing this effort in the years ahead."

The largest jump in membership occur-

Cont'd. - Page 3

Christmas Fund To Aid Ministers

The Christmas Fund, an all-church offering of the Pension Board of the United Church of Christ, is suggested for celebration in local churches during one of this year's four Advent Sundays.

Proceeds from the Christmas Fund are used for three purposes, the first of which is to send checks and Christmas greetings in the name of the Church to Conference-nominated retirees in need. In addition, proceeds are also used to help ministers and their families for whom emergencies have exhausted their financial resources. Finally, the Fund helps by improving retirement benefits for qualified ministers on low pensions.

Christmas Fund materials, including free posters, folders and offering envelopes have been sent to all local congregations.

Your support will be appreciated!

UCC Christmas Eve Service To Be Aired

First Plymouth UCC, Lincoln, NB will be the scene of the traditional CBS-TV national Christmas Eve Protestant service. To be aired live at 11:00 P.M., the format for the service will be a "Festival of Lessons and Carols." Otis E. Young is senior minister of the church.

Local UCC-Disciples Conversations Slated

Structured conversations between local churches of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are presently being coordinated throughout each judicatory of the two national denominations.

Under the direction of Dr. Avery Post, President of the United Church of Christ, and Dr. Kenneth L. Teegarden, President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and by authority of official actions taken at the last General Synod and General Assembly, a joint Steering Committee has requested paired or clustered congregations throughout the two churches to participate in a specially prepared series of studies focusing upon covenant, sacrament, ministry, mission and unity.

Designed for six sessions to be held throughout 1981, study materials may be ordered by writing to: Ms. Florence Ann Coppola, United Church of Christ, 105 Madison Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10016.

Congregations to be paired in both churches are scheduled to receive invitations no later than December, 1980. In the Southeast Conference, pairing will be on a state by state basis due to the heavier concentration of Disciple churches throughout the southeast.

Inquiries concerning this process may be addressed to the Conference Office, P.O. Box 29883, Atlanta, GA 30359.

Earthquake Victims Sent Relief

In response to the October 10 earthquake at EL Asnam, Algeria, which resulted in great loss of life as well as structural damage in local communities, an international coalition of service agencies has responded to help serve the quarter of a million persons affected.

Sent to the area were tents, blankets, sleeping bags, clothing, stretchers, surgical kits and high protein biscuits. The United Church of Christ immediately forwarded $10,000 to help support disaster response. Requests for more funding support are expected.

Morgan-Scott Welcomes Director

Mr. Robert Geyer has been hired as the new Director of the Morgan-Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns. Assuming the position on July 7, 1980, Mr. Geyer has been concentrating on streamlining existing programs as well as giving them a continuing sense of Christian direction.

A second new staff person, Ms. Kathy Christensen, has joined the project as of September 14 and will direct Mission-Outreach efforts. She will work directly with 4 of the local churches in Scott County.

The Morgan-Scott Project serves an area where nearly 40 percent of the residents live in substandard housing and nearly half the children never finish high school. The average family income is approximately $6,000.

In addition to a community center, thrift shop and two libraries, the Morgan-Scott Project serves area needs through a variety of programs, two of which are the Good Earth program and the Christmas Store program. In addition, the Project also provides housing and emergency supplies for those victims of home fires.

The Morgan-Scott Project has a slide and tape show available for use, as well as brochures and a newsletter. For more information write: Mr. Robert Geyer, Morgan-Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns, P.O. Box 8, Deer Lodge, TN 37726.

Church World Service Aids In Relief

Church World Service, the international relief and development agency of the National Council of Churches, has been steadily occupied in their relief efforts to needy people not only around the world, but of and in this country as well. Recent activities of CWS include:

—A $3,000 grant to the International Indian Treaty Council to cover part of the expenses incurred in its mail exchange between U.S. hostages and their families last winter.

—A fund to enable relocation of Cuban Refugees under protection of the Peruvian Embassy.

—Financial support and personnel through One Great Hour of Sharing to help Haitian refugees in their resettlement here in the United States.

Church World Service is supported by the United Church of Christ in conjunction with the 31 other member denominations of the National Council of Churches.

Paula Moore and Brenda Williamson of Andalusia presented a ministry in song and witness during Youth Sunday at Antioch Congregational Church.

Youth Sunday Enjoyed

Youth Sunday was held at the Antioch Congregational Church, Andalusia, AL on October 12, 1980. The 25 youth participating in the service led worship as well as composing an all youth choir. Announcer for the program was Barbara Worley.

In addition to singing by the nursery department, the church enjoyed a special time of song by the entire youth group.

Carole Brand, Rachel Floyd and Mrs. Barbara Turner all led different points of the service. Special guests for the service were Paula Moore who played several hymns on her guitar and Brenda Williamson who shared her testimony.

The theme for the worship service was taken from I John 4:7, "Beloved let us love one another."

—Carole Brand

No Comment Necessary

"We respectfully petition, request, and entreat that due and adequate provision be made, this day and the date hereinafter subscribed, for the satisfying of these petitioners' nutritional requirements and for the organizing of such methods of allocation and distribution as may be deemed necessary and proper to assure the reception by and for said petitioners of such quantities of baked cereal products as shall, the judgment of the aforesaid petitioners, constitute a sufficient supply thereof."

—Governmental Bureaucratese

English Translation: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Muslims: Understanding — Not Confronting

Announcing that the annual grant to the Christian-Muslim Task Force from the United Church of Christ's Board for World Ministries would jump from $1,500 in 1979 to $12,000 this year, Dale L. Bishop, Middle East UCBWM executive, stated that "as a result of events in Iran, it is more important than ever that we understand Muslims rather than confront them."

Launched in 1977 by the National Council of Churches to foster improved relations between the Christian and Muslim worlds, the Christian-Muslim Task Force has grown from a modest agency with one part-time staff member to a thriving organization with seven staff members who are booked solid for the next six months with speaking engagements in local churches throughout the country.

While it is funded by 14 church agencies, the United Church Board for World Ministries is one of the largest financial contributors to the Task Force.

"We have a long-standing commitment to work with Muslims," Dr. Bishop explains. "The Board sent the first American missionaries to the Middle East in 1820. Today, we have contact with Muslim groups in Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as the Middle East."

Both Dr. Bishop and the Rev. Byron Haines, director of the Christian-Muslim Task Force, point out that the recent nationalistic upsurge in Iran and the plight of the U.S. hostages there have spurred American churches to learn more about Islam. Many Americans view the Iranian situation as a danger to the Western world, observes Mr. Haines, "but we're trying to help people understand what Islam is, and that it is not a threat to the West." It has become increasingly difficult for American churches to support missions in a world "not familiar to us," he adds.

The Christian-Muslim Task Force conducts seminars, publishes a newsletter, maintains a dialogue with the Muslim community in the U.S., advises American missionaries, acts as consultant to missions staff of major denominations and brings Muslim and Christian leaders together to work on mutual concerns. The Task Force is housed at Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, CT.

Curt's Nuggets

What we call "our ownership" is only a temporary holding. Most of us don't even have 99 year leases!

Curtis R. Schumacher
Pleasant Hill, TN

Zimbabwe Receives Aid

A grant of $50,000 to aid rehabilitation in Zimbabwe has been made by the United Church of Christ's Board for World Ministries. David M. Stowe, executive vice-president of the global mission agency, announced that the monies will be distributed through the United Church-related schools and hospitals in the area bordering Mozambique. The first $22,000 is being used during the fall planting season to purchase fertilizer and seed to replenish crops. The rest will be sent to rebuild schools and hospitals damaged or destroyed during the war in the Mt. Silinda and Chikore areas.

"We have a long history of mission work in southern Zimbabwe and the medical and educational institutions that the church has provided for the people there need rehabilitation," Dr. Stowe pointed out. "There is also an acute hunger problem because of the war."

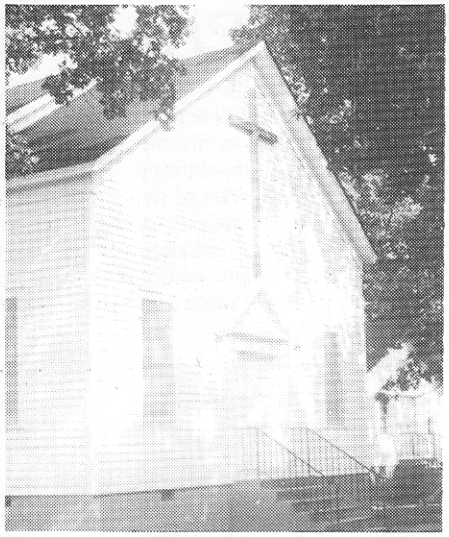
"The denomination's partner church, United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, is developing a ten-year plan to help rehabilitate and strengthen the new nation," Dr. Stowe continued. "We will appropriate more funds as the need arises."

Moral Use of Power Questioned

In his book, **Morality of Power**, Charles McCollough makes a useful distinction between "moralistic power" and "moral power." The goal of "moralistic power" is to see that society as a whole follows a particular personal moral code. The goal of "moral power" is global well being for all people and nature. Moralistic power thinks that "when change in society occurs, it should result in advantages to the deserving, who can more wisely decide social policy and rules for social intercourse." Moral power thinks social change "should result in a redistribution of resources and decision making power to all. On any given issue, decisions should be made by those most affected by the issue."

On these terms "moral majorities may be only moralistic majorities, and in place of exercising moral power they may be only playing more power politics."

William T. Scott, Jr.



The new cross pictured above was recently added to the facade of Oak Grove UCC, Pine Mountain, GA. Constructed of redwood, the cross was built by Mr. Wayne Hodnett and other members and friends.

Serving, Not Serenading

A shepherd was once asked what the term "Christian Service" meant to him, and he responded in this way.

"Many people who want to serve the Lord think that the best way to do so is to shout themselves hoarse praising His name, but here is the way I look at it. I'm hired to work for the man who owns these sheep. Now if I sit around the house and tell everyone what a fine fellow my boss is, and in the evenings go over to serenade him, and thank him for being such a great guy, I would be doing just what a lot of Christians are doing, but it wouldn't suit my boss."

"I would probably be fired."

"But, when I get out with the sheep, and feed them, and water them, and protect them from all manner of harm and danger, and see to it that they do not stray away and get lost, then I am serving my boss in the way he wants to be served. And Christian Service is like that. We help care for the sheep, and do everything we can to preserve our Master's interests."

—Irving Larson

Minority Churches — Cont'd.

red among Asian and Pacific Islander churches, the report states. Black church membership, heavily concentrated in the South, rose 22.2 percent to 48,989 within the last ten years. A large portion of the 8,903 additonal members joined the 30 new Black churches established during the decade.

American Indian churches in the United Church of Christ increased their ranks by 23.4 percent between 1970 and 1979 for a total membership of 1,118. The number of Hispanic churches rose from 69 to 81 during the last ten years, but their membership remained fairly stable.

Dr. William J. McKinney, secretary for research and evaluation for the Board and author of the report, said that the study is the first one made to analyze the growth and functioning of minority churches within a predominantly white mainline denomination.

CONFERENCE CORNER

DR. EMMETT FLOYD

The coming of the Thanksgiving-Advent-Christmas season is always one of the most meaningful of the year. The mixture of remembrance and anticipation are such a part of this time. Friends and family take on a special importance for all of us.

Taking them in order I feel very thankful this season for the opportunity of working with such a fine group of people and churches. I do believe we are really a family in this place. Memories of the past with such names as Scott, Butterfield, Lightbourne and Andes remind me of a rich heritage in this Conference. Much had been done — much remains to be done.

With the coming of Advent-Christmas we are reminded that God is ever visiting this world which is the result of Divine Creative activity. Love keeps breaking in upon our hardness and selfishness in the person of Jesus Christ. To a troubled day the Good News is announced as it was in the past. We also are a part of the family of God to hear the news. We are now called to share the news. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a savior is given."

May all the joys of the season be yours as together we thank our God and re-commit ourselves to the service of Christ our Lord!

Gardner Ordained To Ministry

Mr. Jerry Gardner, a recent graduate of Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, GA, was ordained to the Christian Ministry on October 24, 1980 by Button Gwinnett UCC and the Georgia-South Carolina Association.

A flight controller for over 17 years with the Navy and the FAA before entering seminary training, Rev. Gardner recently completed a CPE program at Emory University Hospital.

He lives with his wife Abby and their two children in Decatur, GA.

Inclusive-Language Lectionary Considered

A task force on biblical translation has urged the National Council of Churches to prepare a new lectionary — a collection of biblical texts to be used in public worship — with an emphasis on inclusive and non-sexist language.

The task force prepared its recommendations at the request of the council's Division of Education and Ministry, which will vote on them at its November meeting. The division also houses the committee that prepares the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the most widely accepted modern English translation.

"The lectionary texts can be the first step in a process of discovery and experience toward a new and inclusive language of proclamation and devotion which grows out of our new and deepened insights into God's revelation," the task force said.

In its current work, the RSV Bible Committee is already attempting to change some masculine-biased language about people (though not about God). Where the masculine bias crept in through later translations — but did not appear in the original Greek or Hebrew — the committee is excising it.

While disagreement still remains concerning gender change in reference to God, several speakers reminded the committee that the process of changing Scripture into inclusive language will proceed apace — with or without the National Council of Churches. After numerous stories of local pastors translating on their feet — often with less-than-perfect results — no one denied that a need exists.

The only question that remains, the committee acknowledged, is how best to meet it.

Energy Guidelines Heated

After a year's experience, here are some suggestions to help you in following the Energy Guidelines, in addition to the maintenance of 65 degree temperatures at all adult meetings:

—Dress warmly

—Sit very close to each other

—Wear thermal underwear in appropriate liturgical colors: purple - violet in Advent, etc.

—Rush to the front. This will increase body temperature

—Position yourself near the pulpit. It is said the air is warmer there.

A Prayer of Confession

Father, we confess that we are often taken by fads and fancy; we look to new products for our excitement; we accept the words of self-proclaimed prophets; we escape into the realm of mass media; we are dazzled by plasticity and glitter; we praise the trite wisdom of shallow philosophers; we are addicted to so-called wonder drugs; we labor and save to serve our materialist needs; we ignore the promptings of Your spiritual voice; we search and search but fail to find satisfaction. Lord, forgive us for looking in the wrong places, and help us to set our eyes and hearts and minds upon Jesus who alone preaches and teaches us the truth that will set us free. Amen.

—Bulletin, St. John's, Cullman, AL

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Emmett O. Floyd, Executive Secretary

PS Form 3526 Aug. 1978 (Page 1) (See instructions on reverse)

Who We Are: A Second Look

Nearly a quarter century ago, the formation of the United Church of Christ brought together two denominations, the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, that differed in their basic polity. Recently, at a consultation on church polity convened by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Dr. Louis H. Gunnemen, former Dean of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, noted, "Not many of the present generation of the United Church people remember the oft-expressed hope of the founders that this new church body would develop a form of organization free from the constraints and limitations of traditional polities."

Looking back at our union, Dr. Gunneman asks whether a new polity was, in fact, devised. Is the organization of the UCC really new on the American scene? What developed, suggests Dr. Gunneman, was a principle of order that was new. "The new element was a convenient relationship of autonomous units of church life — a relationship delineated but not regulated by a constitution and by-laws."

Dr. Gunneman's remarks are contained in a paper which, together with other papers presented at the consultation, is available in the Fall 1979 issue of New Conversations, published by UCBHM. Place your order by writing the UCBHM, 132 West 31st Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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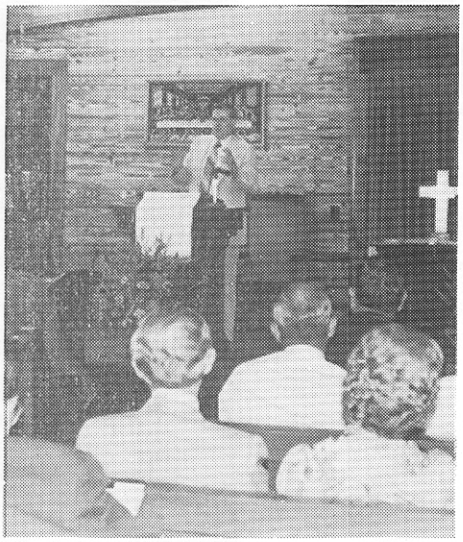

Dr. Emmett O. Floyd speaking at the Southern Alabama-Northwest Florida Association Annual Meeting held October 11.

Association Meeting Enjoyed

Some 70 persons enjoyed tha Annual Meeting of the Southern Alabama-Northwest Florida Association, held on October 11 at Blackwoods Church, Enterprise, AL.

Special guest at this year's Annual Meeting was Southeast Conference Minister Dr. Emmett O. Floyd, who brought special greetings to the Association from retired Conference Minister William Andes. Noting that he "was very encouraged in what is going on in area churches," Dr. Floyd emphasized interest in Christian education as well as in new church development. Dr. Floyd commented, "We should revitalize the older churches among us and also be interested in the newer ones being built within our Conference."

In addition to regular annual business and a morning program of song provided by a quintet from Blackwoods Church, Associate Conference Minister Warren Blankenhorn addressed the delegates concerning new leadership and changes for the coming year.

Awards were presented to Blackwood Church for highest number in attendance and to New Effort, Bonifay for the highest percentage of members present. The 1981 meeting will be held at Antioch Church in Andalusia, AL.

Energy Angles

The American Institute of Architects estimates (conservatively) that adoption of all presently-recommended conservation measures could create energy savings of 30 percent in existing buildings and 60 percent in new buildings.

COCU Marks 20th Anniversary

COCU, which stands for Consultation On Church Union, marked its 20th year as a movement at a meeting held January 22-24, 1980 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Begun in 1960 when United Presbyterian leader Eugene Carson Blake proposed, in an historic sermon, that his church and three others unite, COCU today involves 10 American denominations representing more than 20 million members.

One of the consequences of this increased interest and participation by so many diverse church fellowships is that developing a common plan of union has become a time consuming as well as an intricately involved task. Nevertheless, the leadership of COCU remains committed to struggling with the many steps that promise to eventually lead to full, organic union.

Churches participating in COCU are the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church, National Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church U.S., United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church and United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Book Helps Ministry To Handicapped

Creating the Caring Congregation, by Harold Wilke, is the new book for churches concerned about ministries to and with persons with handicaps.

The new book became available in March through religious stores, and through Healing Community, 139 Walworth Ave., White Plains, N.Y. 10606. The price is $4.95.

Designed to answer the congregation's need to create orderly procedures for determining its role in ministering with persons with handicaps and other alienated individuals, this book fills a long felt need.

Secular society is under legal obligation to make its institutions and resources available to persons with disabilities. The church, under no legal, but under a moral mandate to do the same, is asking the question, "how can we do it?" Here are the answers.

The author, Harold H. Wilke, is a UCC minister who teaches at Union Seminary in New York and is director of the Healing Community, a project designed to help churches respond to the needs of alienated individuals.

N-E-W-S and N-O-T-E-S

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of its founding, Pilgrim UCC, St. Petersburg, FL, invited founding pastor, Rev. Henry Tuttle and his wife, Jean, to a special appreciation banquet marking the occasion. Held October 19, the Tuttles also were privileged to help the church in the burning of its mortgage. Rev. Tuttle is pastor of Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham, AL and currently is serving as Moderator of the Southeast Conference.

.....

Rev. George Hawkins, former pastor of Montgomery First UCC, has been called to pastor the 500 member Laodicea United Church, located in Raleigh, N.C. Rev. Hawkins is currently pursuing his Master of Divinity degree at Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C.

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Services were held on September 28 at First Congregational UCC in Birmingham, AL for Mrs. Elmyra M. Hall who died on September 24, 1980. A retired public school teacher and faithful member of the church, Mrs. Hall was active for a number of years in the Ala-Tenn Association as well as in the Southeast Conference.

Former UCC missionaries George and Gladys Sturgen spent over a week touring and speaking to members of Southeast Conference churches during the latter part of October. The Sturgens served in Bocca, Bangladesh from 1975-77. Both were involved in the Bangladesh government's family planning emphasis.

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Evelyn Blankenhorn, wife of Associate Conference Minister Warren Blankenhorn, is now back on her feet following surgery at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, GA. Mrs. Blankenhorn reports that she feels great and is gaining strength daily.

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Mr. J. E. Lauderdale began his pastorate of Rock Stand Congregational Christian Church, Roanoke, AL, as of October 1, 1980. Mr. Lauderdale is a licentiate of the East Alabama Association.

.....

During the month of October the morning worship services of Lanett, AL, Congregational Christian Church, UCC were broadcast over the community radio. Mr. Albert Thorton is the church's interim pastor.

As a result of a motion made at the Annual Meeting of the Ala-Tenn Association by Mr. Frank Haile, Treasurer of that body, an additional $600 was raised and forwarded as benevolence support to the Morgan-Scott Project. The additional contributions raised the 1980 Association support to a total of $1,000.

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The youth group of Cullman, AL, UCC has an active ministry to the aged. On the first Wednesday of each month, ten members of the youth group provide a hot meal for 28 senior citizens in the community. This is a regular part of the youth group program.

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Rev. Robert and Mary Peters, residents of Uplands Retirement Center, Pleasant Hill, TN, represented the retirement center and were in charge of an Uplands exhibit at the bi-annual meeting of the Florida Conference, held September 26-28 at Winter Park, FL.

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Some 21 persons participated in a Ministry of Volunteers Workshop held on October 18 at Belvidere, TN, UCC. Six churches were represented in the workshop which was led by OCLL representative, Rev. Joyce Myers.

.....

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ, a new church start located in Marietta, GA, has a good problem — they are running out of space in their temporary worship center in a local bowling alley! Alternatives are being examined to help alleviate this "good" problem.

.....

Dr. Harold Wilke, a UCC minister known for his work with and as an advocate for handicapped persons, was the main speaker at the September 10th opening Colloquium of the United Nations. The 1981 Colloquium theme is International Year of Disabled Persons.

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